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Mapa de las Cercanias de Mexico, Que Comprehende Todos Lugares y Rios; las Lagunas de Tescuco, Chalco, Xochimilco, Sn. Christobal, Zumpango y Oculma. . . Año 1785.

Stock#: 49554ba
Map Maker: Lopez
Date: 1785
Place: Madrid
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 15.5 x 14 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Map of the Valley of Mexico Showing the Now Vanished Lake System

The map provides a plan of the lake system of the Valley of Mexico, with the direction of the flow of water northwards from Lake Chalco and Xochimilco to Lake Texcoco, and thence via Lake Zumpango and the new tunnel-cum-cutting to the Río de Tula.

The area mapped is from Tula (NW) to Pachuca (NE), Amecameca (SE) and Atlapulco (SW). Details included are old and new works of drainage (the *desagüe*) and principal roads. In addition, there are mountains and volcanoes, dormant and active, shown in semi-perspective. The compass indicator is in Lake Texcoco itself, showing the map to be east-oriented.

A long note at top right explains that the map is based upon a map drawn by Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and published in José Francisco de Cuevas Aguirre y Espinosa, *Extracto de los autos de diligencias, y reconocimientos de los rios, lagunas, vertientes y desagües de la Capital Mexico, y su valle* (Mexico City, 1748), in Sigüenza y Góngora's *Plano geografico de las Inmediaciones de Mexico*, as revised by Joseph Antonio de Alzate y Ramírez in 1776 and published as the *Mapa de las aguas que per[sic] el circulo de noventa leguas vienen a la laguna de Texcoco*.



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Draining the lake

As indicated by this map, the *Lago de Mexico*, also known as the *Lago de Texcoco*, was one part of a large lake system that used to be in central Mexico. Agriculture near the lake began 7,000 years ago with several early civilizations competing to control access and farming near its shores.

After the fall of Teotihuacan in 600-800 AD, several other city states fought for prominence in the region. In 1325 the Aztecs founded Tenochtitlan on the western side of the lake, developing their capital city on an island via a system of dams and canals. This city became the Federal District. There were large floating gardens, *chinampas*, on the lakes; they surrounded the capital city and were also prevalent in other shore areas.

After the Spanish took Tenochtitlan, they never repaired the Aztec dams, making flooding a recurring problem in the region. To stem the floods, the Spanish attempted to drain the lake, with a major effort to divert water and improve drainage as part of the Bourbon reforms in the eighteenth century. This was called the *Desagüe del Valle de México*. However, drainage was not entirely successful until the mid-twentieth century. Now, the majority of the lake system is dry, with a considerable portion of the lake valley now serving as an urban area.

This map was published in Madrid by Juan Lopez (1765-1825), who was a member of the *Real Academia de la Sociedad de Bellas Artes* in Seville and of the *Sociedad de Asturias*. Both Lopez's works and those of his father, also an engraver, were for sale in Madrid, where maps of the colonies were popular commodities. Lopez created Spain's first catalog of maps in 1808.

The map is exceedingly rare. These (see another copy at [{{ inventory_detail_link\('49555ba'\) }}](#)) the first examples we have ever seen on the market.

Old and new works of drainage (the Desagüe) and principal roads are indicated.

The area mapped is from Tula (NW) to Pachuca (NE), Amecameca (SE) and Atlapulco (SW).

Mountains and extinct and live volcanoes shown in semi-perspective. Compass indicator in Lake Texcoco.

The map is exceedingly rare. This is the first example we have ever seen on the market.

Detailed Condition:

Toning and minor foxing.